(b) and (c) The exercises are only a part of bilateral defence cooperation.

Opening of Defence Production of Private Sector

2866. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence production would be open for private sector;

(b) if so, whether the security aspect have been assessed before opening of Defence production to private sector; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) In May, 2001 Defence industry sector, which was hitherto reserved from the public sector has been opened upto 100% for Indian Private Sector participation with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), permissible upto 26%, both subject to licensing. This includes all types of defence equipment. Detailed guidelines were issued by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) after consultation with the Ministry of Defence and Industry Associations for consideration of applications for grant of license in January, 2002.

2. The security concerns have been adequately addressed by incorporating the following provisions in the guidelines:—

(i) Adequate safety and security procedures would be put in place by the licensee once the licence is granted and production commences. These would be subject to verification by authorized Government agencies.

(ii) Arms and ammunition produced by the private manufacturers will be primarily sold to the Ministry of Defence. These items may also be sold to other Government entities under the control of the Ministry of Home affairs and State Governments with the prior approval of the Ministry of Defence. No such item shall be sold within the country to any other person or entity. The export of manufactured items would be subject to policy and guidelines as applicable to Ordnance Factories and Defence Public Sector Undertakings. Non-lethal items would be permitted

for sale to persons/entities other than the Central or State Governments with the prior approval of the Ministry of Defence. Licensee would also need to institute a verifiable system of removal of all goods out of their factories. Violation of these provisions may lead to cancellation of the licence.

(iii) The Government also reserves the right to check the antecedents of the foreign collaborators and domestic promoters, including their financial standing and credentials in the world market.

Stopping of Conversion

2867. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a demand has been made in the country that the Central Government should enact a law to stop conversion by allurement or force; and

(b) Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) No specific request has been received to this effect and at present there is no proposal to enact such a law by Union Government.

Bifurcation of National Commission For SCs/STs

2868. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to bifurcate the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to set up a separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes;

(b) if so, the reasons for taking this decision; and

(c) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir. It has been decided to set up a separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes under Article 338 of the Constitution by bifurcating the existing National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.